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Middle East Situation Report #37
(as of 1100 EST, 15 February 1984)

LEBANON/SYRIA

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Druze and Shia militia linked up this morning within 200 meters of the Marine positions at the Beirut International Airport, thereby establishing control by anti-government forces of the entire area south of Beirut to the outskirts of the town of Ad Damur. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
the remaining three battalions of the Army's 4th Brigade are at the mouth of the Damur River and the LAF command has not yet decided whether to regroup and refit in place or transfer the 4th Brigade north by sea to the Christian harbor of Juniyah. The Army reportedly lost 3 tanks and 4 APCs in the fighting. [REDACTED]

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Druze leader Junblatt telephoned the US Embassy in Damascus this morning to confirm that the Druze and Shia have no intention of harming the Marines at the airport. He also claimed that there were no Palestinians with the PSP troops and that he was "fixing it with the Syrians." [REDACTED]

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[redacted] the leadership of the Christian Lebanese Forces militia has decided to opt for partition of Lebanon and the creation of a Christian enclave under Israeli protection. [redacted] in Jubayl, a major town in the Christian heartland, the majority of the Lebanese Forces militia shows no enthusiasm for such an enclave, further fighting, or a defense of East Beirut. Last night unknown persons assassinated the Lebanese Forces leader in Jubayl, who had called for volunteers to go south to defend Beirut. [redacted]

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IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Iran conducted an air raid on Baqubah, a town 35 kilometers northeast of Baghdad, in retaliation for yesterday's Iraqi air attacks on Ilam and other Iranian cities. Iraqi press reports indicate only two Iranian aircraft were involved. Baghdad has announced that the Baqubah raid will not affect yesterday's announced one week cessation of Iraqi strikes on Iranian urban areas. [redacted]

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-- Should Iran continue its air strikes we believe Iraq will abandon its ceasefire. Iraq has far superior air power and Iran cannot successfully counter Iraqi attacks with air strikes. Baqubah is only minutes from the Iranian border and, as a result, is an easy target for a quick Iranian air raid. The two Iranian aircraft inflicted only about 20 civilian casualties. In contrast, Iraq used over 25 aircraft in yesterday's attacks on Ilam and inflicted over 400 Iranian casualties. [redacted]

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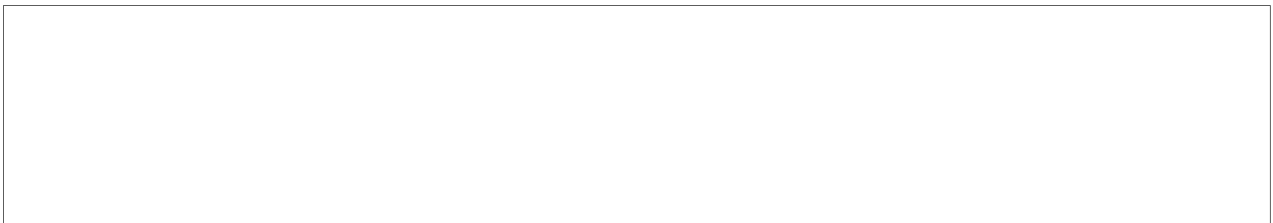
Iranian Ambassador to Damascus Mohtashami-pur was injured slightly yesterday by a bomb hidden in a religious book he had just received.

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According to a press report, an unknown group called the Arab Organization of 5 May claims responsibility for the attack.

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